

ANALYSIS OF SICK LEAVE USAGE IN THE EL PASO FIRE DEPARTMENT

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The El Paso Fire Department, EPFD, faced the task of reducing sick leave usage. Although the city's personnel department had identified the city's high rate based on a general study of all city employees, they never conducted an in-depth analysis of the fire department.

An evaluative research methodology was chosen to determine the extent of the problem and possible causal factors leading to recommended corrective actions. This included a literature review, a departmental sick leave study, and a survey of largest 150 city fire departments. They sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the sick leave usage rate for the EPFD compare to other largest 150 city fire departments and to the private sector?
2. What is the average sick leave usage for largest 150 city fire departments and the private sector and what factors influence this rate?
3. Does existing literature or existing procedures provide causal factors and proven methods in reducing sick leave use?
4. Have fire departments identified causal factors and what successful steps have they taken to reduce sick leave usage?

Analysis indicated a serious sick leave problem. Usage on the El Paso Fire Department more than doubled survey responses. The survey and literature review provided possible solutions for successfully reducing sick leave usage. The study developed the following recommendations:

1. The fire department must adopt a policy that incorporates a supervisory review.
2. The Fire Chief must exercise his options in requiring documentation of absenteeism.
3. A labor and management committee adopt and implement the health and fitness initiative.
4. Continue the culture change by incorporating sick leave review into an officer development program along with continued reinforcement in promotional review panels.
5. Create a project team to review other systems such as paid time off banks, no-fault systems, and incentives and consider a comprehensive leave policy.
6. The city must develop an alternative duty program that understands the physical challenges of fire fighting.
7. The computer analysis of sick leave use must be refined to allow investigations of factors relating to supervisory review.

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INTRODUCTION

With continued pressures from taxpayers to reduce taxes while still providing required services, fire executives attempt to apply business techniques to public service organizations. To control costs, managers must effectively control their resources. Since over 90 percent of a fire department budget pays for wages and benefits, executives must control this area. Leave management is essential to balancing needed benefits to acceptable costs. Within this framework, Collective Bargaining Agreements must also be addressed.

A cursory review of sick leave within the El Paso Fire Department, EPFD, identified high sick leave usage by employees. Numerous causes were theorized. The job of a fire fighter is physically and mentally challenging. Rehabilitation time is greater since they must be completely recovered to return to work. Other factors take their toll: they are exposed to illness daily, their job is inherently stressful, their injuries can be severe. Thus, a thorough analysis is necessary to determine the extent of the problem. The evaluative research methodology was chosen to evaluate the present situation and to determine what corrective actions may be appropriate.

The purpose of the research is to determine the extent of the sick leave problem based on national and fire department averages. The study should identify potential causal factors and solutions to effectively combat abuse, enhance productivity, reduce costs, change attitudes and improve morale. Since leave is contained in the collective bargaining agreement, both sides must agree on any changes. Knowing the facts sets the stage for discussion. The research questions

to be answered are:

1. How does the sick leave usage rate for the EPFD compare to other largest 150 city fire departments and to the private sector?
2. What is the average sick leave usage for largest 150 city fire departments and the private sector and what factors influence this rate?
3. Does existing literature or existing procedures provide causal factors and proven methods in reducing sick leave use?
4. Have fire departments identified causal factors and what successful steps have they taken to reduce sick leave usage?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The main issues of the 1997 collective bargaining agreement between the City of El Paso, Texas (City) and Local 51, International Association of Fire Fighters (Association), centered on three wellness issues: sick leave, on-duty illnesses and injuries, and medical insurance. During this research project, studies of sick leave usage compared the city work force to fire fighters. Local 51 questioned the significance of the comparison. They asked if the City was comparing apples to apples. With the recognized stress and physical demands of the job, they felt the city should compare fire fighters to other fire fighters, not office workers. They asked if there was a sick leave problem at all?

Sick leave is not a new issue for collective bargaining. For the last seven years, Local 51 negotiated to reduce the restrictions on sick leave usage. The collective bargaining agreement signed November 1989 required proof of illness or injury if the employee missed four or more

consecutive days of work. Additionally, the Chief could require medical certificates from employees missing eight or more days in preceding twelve months.

With the signing of the 1991 CBA, the requirement of a doctor's note after eight days of sick leave was deleted. Although it allowed the Fire Chief to require medical proof for four consecutive days of sick leave use, the department's rules and regulations required it only after missing more than four days. The Fire Chief never exercised his option for stricter sick leave controls.

By 1995, the three Deputy Chiefs, shift commanders, identified increased use of sick leave and obvious trends. Employees rarely missed only one shift, two days, for sick leave. A sick leave event resulted in them staying off duty for four consecutive days. They noticed obvious increases in usage for weekends, especially payday weekends. Every holiday displayed sick leave spikes.

To address the issue, they ordered the District Chiefs to identify personnel using above average sick leave and to begin counseling sessions. They faced the difficulty of identifying average sick leave use since no standard existed. They also lacked a comprehensive sick leave policy. In the counseling sessions, they sought to identify sick leave factors. They placed a priority on educating employees on the existing assistance programs: stress, alcohol and drugs. Although initially the attempt seemed to improve individual sick leave use, this study showed no significant change in usage for the department for that first year.

The growth of the city, over 600,00, along with the low tax base, places emphasis on effective use of existing staffing to provide continued service for the public. A 1996 survey of the City of El Paso Department Heads showed the majority believed sick leave abuse existed in

their department. In El Paso, the value of reducing employee's sick leave usage by two days is over one million dollars. A separate study of El Paso Mass Transit Department found they staffed 31 of the 298 positions to compensate for high usage of worker's compensation and sick leave. This staffing also was valued near one million dollars. One million dollars translated to one training session for the city's 5000 employees, plus increasing merit raises to five percent, plus funding an employee assistance program, plus funding 350,000 dollars of safety equipment.

Therefore, the City placed sick leave usage as a top priority for the 1997 CBA with Local 51. On December 30, 1997, the City and Local 51 signed a new agreement. It brought members under the same El Paso Civil Service rule that governs other city employees and their use of sick leave. The Association continues to question the comparison of fire fighters to other city employees. They contend the high physical and mental stress placed on fire fighters preclude any unrelated comparisons. Additionally, they question whether a sick leave problem really exists. A study must be completed to compare sick leave use to other fire departments, identify any problems and develop recommendations.

This research relates directly to the Executive Leadership unit nine on Labor Relations. Research was developed during collective bargaining and the new contract was signed during the project. Analysis and implementation of the changes are on-going, with other alternatives being reviewed. Executive Leadership units dealing with assessing organizational culture and managing change also apply since these factors are critical to the development and success of a comprehensive leave policy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the literature review was to identify research relating to sick leave usage specifically dealing with national averages and successful reduction programs. This information would allow comparisons between the private and public sectors related to the fire service on causes of high sick leave rates? Insights could be gained into programs and policies to reduce sick leave use to answer the research questions. In addition, the information provides guidance in developing the questions for the fire department survey.

The Sick Leave Problem

Employer's concern over the excessive use of sick leave is well documented based on the number of articles available. The fire service also shares this concern; six Executive Fire Officer Program Applied Research Projects were found. The increases in sick leave use along with its damaging cost drives employers to search for methods to affect the situation. Managers attempt to increase productivity and service with shrinking budgets. To do so requires management of personnel costs. A large part of the cost of absenteeism is due to sick leave.

Burkell (1985) identified several ill effects of sick leave abuse to the fire service including staffing strength, increased costs, ineffective programs, reduced morale, and the entitlement mentality. A Commerce Clearing House, CCH, study stated unplanned absences by the work force leveled off at 2.8 percent up from the 1992-1993 average of under 2.5 percent (Darling 1996). This figure increased from the 2.1 percent in 1982 (Gardiner, 1992). Landy, Vasy, and Smith (1984) estimated that typical absence rates run about 4 percent in most industrial organizations. This translates into the average national average of 7.2 days per year

(Cotter, Williams 1997). One study identified all avoidable absences due to 25 per cent of employees (Sadri, Lewis 1995). Various group numbers vary widely.

Darling (1996) notes that government employees lead the way. Union hourly employees call off because of sickness at the rate of 6.1 days per year (Martinez 1995). The retail and wholesale industry used less than four days (Darling, 1994), equal to the exempt salaried employees' median use (Martinez 1995). New York state workers took 9.4 days per year off work (Gardiner, 1992), and Markowich (1994) noted Connecticut workers used 9.77 days. In contrast, David Bublitz (1992) showed shift fire fighters using just over four days per year. In Stuart Robinson's 1993 project, Smithfield, Rhode Island fire fighters totaled 5.7 sick leave days per year.

This time is expensive for employers. A CCH study notes the work forces unplanned absences cost of \$603 per employee annually (Darling 1996). Estimates of actual costs are even more; employers must add related costs such as loss of productivity and temporary replacement costs (Markowich 1996). A 1990-1991 Rutgers University study of 12 major companies found an average of 8.6% of an organization's annual payroll goes to pay these costs (Cotter, Williams 1997).

Studies show numerous causes for sick leave use, including the obvious, personal sickness. Although it still ranks as the number one reason for unscheduled absences, personal illness accounts for only 30 percent of the total (Darling 1996). What happens in the other 70 percent of the cases? Changes in attitudes and needs in the work force affected leave and forced employers to examine their leave management policies.

Family

Family and lifestyle changes forced employers to address leave usage. Demographics feed the changes, with dual earners, single parents, and care givers needing time off to deal with their life (Shellenbarger 1996). With both parents working, family needs were obviously changing. CCH's 1996 Unscheduled Absence Survey identified family issues as a close second place for unscheduled absences behind personal illness (Darling 1996). Shellenberger's (1996) report of the 1996 CCH survey indicated family issues accounted for 26 percent of employee's absences.

Working parents of young kids take more time off than any other employee group. (Darling, 1996). Women use more days than men. This may be related to their sensitivity to family needs, but married persons usually have lower rates (Drago and Wooden, 1992). This is especially apparent for women with children under age six. In a 1987 National Medical Expenditure Survey, single parent men and men with working wives "behaved more like mothers with young children than like other men" (Vistnes 1997). Smith (1990) notes higher rates of unscheduled leave not only during summer and Christmas times, but before and after these times as well. She also notes the increased usage on Mondays and Fridays. These are special times for families.

Some employers were slow to meet these family needs. The government took the reins by passing the 1993 Family Medical Leave Act, FMLA. In contrast, the majority of fire fighter contracts as early as 1981 allowed for absenteeism for family illness and other emergencies (Sapp, Carter 1991). The FMLA requires employers with over fifty employees to provide up to twelve weeks of unpaid leave for birth or adoption of a child, care of family member or care of

self. Employers report fewer problems with the act than originally anticipated.

Spencer (1997) reports that 90 percent of employers expended little or nothing on compliance and 87 percent reported no effect on productivity or profits. He continues that few workers took leave under the act mainly because workers cannot afford to take advantage of the leave. This is not the case in El Paso. City employees are allowed to utilize their sick leave accumulations when taking time off under the FMLA.

Entitlement

The entitlement mentality also causes sick leave rates to rise. In 1996, it accounted for 15 percent of sick leave in the CCH survey, up from the 1995 of 9 percent (Schellenbarger 1996). A Gallup Organization survey identified 24 percent of employed adults used sick leave at least once a year while not being sick (Martinez 1995). The entitlement mentality changes the definition of sick leave. Originally, the benefit protected the worker as would an insurance policy. Sapp and Carter (1991) define sick leave as paid leave for employee illness or injury; not as earned vacation leave or a benefit the employee may claim to use for such purposes. Today, many employees believe the benefit belongs to them, much the same as vacation or holidays.

Paul Gibson, a human resources analyst with CCH states “Many of these workers feel that they are entitled to all the sick days a company sets aside and take them whether they are sick or not” (Menchen 1996). Gardiner (1992) addresses the “absence culture which comprises the values, belief, and norms (including policies) concerning attendance in an organization.” He notes two studies that indicate past absenteeism was found to be a better predictor than job satisfaction. These studies emphasize the organizational culture more than

work conditions. Thus, change requires the organization to alter its culture.

Unions

Chaudhury (1992) reported unionization as a factor that increases total days lost. From 1979 to 1989, a National Bureau of National Affairs survey indicated contracts that included sick leave clauses jumped from 25 percent to 89 percent (Sapp, Carter 1991). In contrast, a 1988 U.S. Department of Labor study of local governments found that fire fighters had sick leave benefits in 97 percent of their bargaining agreements (Sapp, Carter 1991). Fire fighters appear to hold sick leave benefits as very important.

Age

Another change, the graying of America, will continue to take its toll. The baby boomers have now reached their mid-fifties. As the country ages, its absenteeism will increase. The Bureau of Labor Statistics, BLS, identified workers under thirty-five using four to five days annually; this figure jumps to ten days for those over fifty-five years of age (Cotter, Williams, 1997). The loss of the federal age exemption for Police and Fire Departments resulted in older new employees. With the reinstatement of the age exemptions, some employers did not revert to their previous restricted entrance age requirement. Older employee will continue to enter fire departments.

Solutions

The research questions asked if existing literature provides proven methods to reduce sick leave use. Authors espouse numerous cures as the fix for managers in dealing with leave problems. These include changing the leave culture, instituting supervisory review and control,

improving employee morale, providing incentives, changing to a no-fault system, using paid time off banks, utilizing assistance programs and adding wellness programs. Each has its supporters.

Sadri and Lewis (1995) give five characteristics of an ideal attendance policy: fair and consistent, substantial reward system, easily understood and administered, self-policing, and financially sound. Perry (1996) cites the most effective methods of reducing constant absenteeism involve confronting the issue, establishing a firm policy, and providing solutions. Crumrine (1988) states that supervisory control does work. Requiring a doctor's verification for medical problems along with a record review reduced absenteeism. Gardiner (1992) notes that a direct link exists between unusual leave patterns and the lack of supervision (1992). The need of supervisors to enforce policies clearly and uniformly is essential. He noted several important issues: review interval, event frequency, event timing (Gardiner, 1992). He continued with policies alone fail to control sick leave abuse and require formal control where absence is measured and monitored (Gardiner 1992). Sadri and Lewis (1995) conclude that good policies and procedures provide a good foundation for reducing absenteeism, but termination may be the best solution for chronic absenteeism, extinction works.

Employee morale and job satisfaction always come into the discussion of absenteeism abuse. Studies differ on its contribution to the process, but indicate it may not be an element (Drago 1992). As noted earlier, Gardiner (1992) cited studies by Ferrell and Stamm and Ivancevich that past absenteeism is a better predictor than job satisfaction.

Employee groups usually endorse incentives as a method to improve sick leave rates. The 1980's General Motors attempt at improving absenteeism with rewards not only failed, but sent the message that regular attendance is not expected (Sadri, Lewis 1995). With all

avoidable absences due to 25 percent of the workers, incentives end up paying those who already come to work (Sadri, Lewis 1995).

Paid leave banks, usually call PTO's for paid time off, are becoming more popular. The 1996 CCH Unscheduled Absence Survey identified this method as the highest rated and most effective absentee control method among executives and employees (Darling 1996). These plans ignore the reasons why the employee need leave. Employers issue everyone a given number of days per year to use as they need. With a bank, employees can use their days all for vacation or all for sick leave; the decision is theirs. Employees with low sick leave use will end up getting more vacation time. Abusers do not reap rewards. Sick persons have adequate protection against the loss of wages, and the entitlement mentality is removed. There are numerous variables to the plan. Some companies add a long term leave policy or catastrophic benefit. Garden Valley Telephone Company tried another plan. They reduced granted sick leave from twelve to five days and added methods for extended sick leave (Howe 1995).

Even in the early 1990's, executives felt paid leave banks provided the most effective control of sick leave (Lucas 1991). It eliminates the need for supervisory controls, unnecessary doctor's visits or possible lying by the employee. It also addresses the impact on morale that the sick leave abuser has on others in an organization. Employees wonder why they work so hard while others abuse the system with impunity. The proven system is effective in combating sick leave abuse.

The no-fault plan allows a certain number of occurrences of unscheduled leave within a given period. Employers count the occurrences with no attempt to categorize them based on the employee's reasons. The employer identifies a standard that triggers a disciplinary process.

Setting this trigger point is important in not penalizing good employees. Smith (1990) points out that for-cause discipline must be predictable and reasonable. She says it must be communicated and consistent by not allowing supervisory discretion.

A Ford foundation study at Xerox Corporation identified allowing employees some control over their schedules to meet work-family needs reduced absenteeism up to 30 percent (Shellenbarger 1996). Although Smith (1990) felt flex time applied more to the private sector than the fire service, time trades have been common in the fire service. The Fair Labor Standards Act, FLSA, allows individuals to substitute for each other without affecting overtime compensation. A 1996 William Mercer study identified flexible scheduling as a top priority for large firms, but ones with programs were in the minority (Darling 1996). Although by 1998, 90 percent of large United States companies, those with over 1000 employees, offer some version of flextime (Himmelbert, 1998).

The CCH survey for 1996 showed stress as the reason for absences in 11 percent of cases. (Shellenberger 1996). Experts estimate that 40 percent of all organization have an on-site health program and 20 percent of these provide exercise equipment (Marriott 1996). He also noted assistance programs, in 1992, at 68 percent, up from the 33 percent in 1987. These programs include assistance for drug and alcohol abuse, stress, family problems, and financial issues.

In 1997, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, IAFC, combined forces with the International Association of Fire Fighters, IAFF, in developing The Fire Service Joint Labor Management Wellness/Fitness Initiative. The initiative defines wellness to include medical, physical, and emotional fitness with access to rehabilitation when indicated (International

Association of Fire Chiefs [IAFC], International Association of Fire Fighters [IAFF],1997). It is a commitment to (a) the health, safety and longevity of all uniformed personnel, (b) the productivity and performance of all fire crews, and (c) the cost effectiveness and welfare of all fire departments (IAFC, IAFF, 1997). They felt there are other benefits than just reduced absenteeism from a fit work force including reduced health compensation and improved morale and productivity. Alfred Whitehead, the President of IAFF, along with the IAFF President R. David Paulison state that “an effective program should realize significant cost savings in lost work time, workers compensation, and disability” (IAFC, IAFF,1997)

In a 1996 request by the El Paso Personnel Department, department heads suggested several recommendations to deal with sick leave. They felt a doctor’s certificate be required of the employees for sick leave taken in the following situations: before or after days off, before or after holidays, before or after vacations, any absence over one day or a set limit of days, and any pattern absence. They suggested giving rewards or incentives, such as converting unused sick leave to vacation or personal days to employees with good records. They wanted to penalize abusers by prohibiting their promotion and prohibiting over time. The department heads asked for a system to discipline abusers. Finally, they wanted a combined-leave system considered. In essence, they suggested most of the points covered in this literature review.

PROCEDURES

Along with the literature review, a survey was coupled with a local sick leave usage analysis to identify the sick leave problems and to develop possible solutions. The literature review initially provided guidance in developing the survey instrument. It also provided national

standards to gauge the statistical comparisons of both the survey and the analysis. Possible solutions were identified.

Survey Population

A random sample of fifty cities was selected from the 150 highest populated cities listed in the United States (Overberg, 1997). The survey of only large fire departments was intended to compare El Paso and similar organizations. The mean sample city population is 419,910 with 690 paid fire fighters. El Paso, Texas' population is 600,000 with 642 uniformed fire employees. A survey was sent to these 50 fire departments. The article listed New York, New York as the largest with a population of 7,380,908 and Overland Park, Kansas as number 150 with 131,620 persons. The survey population and sample are listed in appendix E.

The survey included 15 questions attempting to answer the research questions and to clarify questions that arose during the preliminary literature review. The survey, with the cover letter, was mailed to fire departments using addresses listed in the 1992 National Directory of Fire Chiefs, Rescue & Emergency Departments. If an Executive Fire Officer program participant's address was available for their randomly selected department, the survey was sent to them for completion. Otherwise, the request was made to the department. They were asked to respond in four weeks, but surveys were accepted for a six week period. Respondents were supplied with a stamped addressed return envelope, but given the option to fax their response.

Twenty-six departments or 52 percent of the sample fifty cities returned their surveys. This was 17.33% of the selected population. Chesapeake, Virginia was the only department using volunteers. They listed 10 volunteers along with their 372 paid fire fighters. The District of Columbia joined 18 states represented in the survey. Six Texas cities responded to the survey

making it the most represented state.

Sick Leave Data

Sick Leave rates were analyzed for the last three years, 1995-1998. Two sources were utilized. El Paso's personnel department provided data for all city employees. They included sick leave numbers for non-uniformed city , police, and fire personnel. In addition, computer records from the fire department's personnel records were analyzed in breaking sick leave usage into various sectors, including ranks and assignment. These provided numbers used in comparing El Paso to the survey data and national figures.

Limitations

The survey was limited to fire departments of the largest 150 cities in the United States. This is not the largest fire departments in the country as metropolitan area or county departments were not considered.

Computer records for sick leave were unavailable from the department's system prior to 1995. Therefore, analysis is limited to this period.

RESULTS

Results to the research and survey questions are grouped where appropriate to ease analysis. The survey is included in appendix D.

1. How does sick leave use in fire departments of large cities compare to El Paso Fire Department usage and with the national averages?

Fifteen departments, just over half of the respondents, calculated their sick leave usage.

Surprisingly, only seven departments used computers to monitor their sick leave. Each department was asked to list sick leave usage for the various ranks within their department noted in Appendix F, Table 1. Additionally, they were asked to compare the Operations division to the Support division personnel rates.

El Paso exceeds the 5.03 days per year mean of the respondents by 6.4 days. El Paso even exceeds the national average of 7.2 days by 4.25 days per year. Statistical analysis indicated the sample mean does not differ significantly from the national mean.

2. Does the response show a relationship between leave provided and use?

Literature review indicated that several studies found a relationship between absenteeism and rate accumulations (Gardiner 1992). The survey asked each department to quantify the amount of leave given. Because of the large number of leave types, the survey sought information on sick leave, personal days, emergency leave, vacation leave, funeral leave and the broad “other.” This attempted to reduce the list of the numerous types of leave.

Henderson (1994) lists twenty common types of leave with pay categories:

Holidays	Funeral leave	Blood donation
Vacations	Illness in Family	Grievance and contract
Jury Duty	Marriage leave	negotiations
Election official	Paternity leave	Lunch, rest, and wash-up
Witness in court	Maternity leave	periods
Civic Duty	Sick leave	Personal leave
Military Leave	Wellness leave	Sabbatical leave
	Time off to vote	

Smith (1990) also identified other categories such as educational and perfect attendance day.

An all inclusive list is difficult to compile.

Returned data also indicated the difficulty of analyzing this relationship. Sick leave is not

always sick leave. Chief Nolen of the Anchorage Fire Department noted their “single all purposes leave account.” Additionally, other types of leaves, such as emergency leave, may be subtracted from sick leave balances as with the Chesapeake, Virginia policy. Seattle also uses it for dependent care. Shreveport, Louisiana grants 365 days of sick leave for permanent employees while Rochester, New York allows six months sick leave a year. Personal sick leave accrual is difficult to assess.

The mean for departments that accumulate sick leave each year equaled 13.12 days per year. In contrast to the literature review, analysis found a weak correlation between the days granted and sick leave usage. A weak association is evidence that one variable is not a predictor of the value of the other (McEwen, Miller). Departments with sick leave use below the mean granted sick leave at higher rate of 16.34 days per year. Henderson (1994) indicates the average sick leave granted in the United States is approximately 10 days.

El Paso allows all permanent employees of the fire department to accumulate sick leave at the rate of 15 days a year. The maximum accumulation is unlimited. El Paso exceeds the fire department survey mean of sick leave granted per year by 1.88 days per year and the national average by five days per year.

3. Is there a relationship between the size of the organization and sick leave usage?

Comments made in several articles spoke of relationships between size and usage; the larger the organization the more distant employees become and sick leave rises. A correlation coefficient was also computed for population and sick leave usage. In this sample, there was no correlation between the two factors shown. Size is not a factor for surveyed fire departments in determining sick leave usage.

4. Is flex time available?

Literature review talked of the improved sick leave usage when companies allowed flex time for their employees. Flex time allows employees more control over their hours of work. Because allowing actual flex time for 24 hour emergency response personnel is difficult, the survey asked if the department allowed time trades. Of the 21 responses to that question, only Honolulu, Garland, and Atlanta did not allow time trades, as noted in appendix H. In this area, fire departments seem to address a need. El Paso allows shift employees to trade time and to owe up to six days to other employees at a given time.

5. Is sick leave usage increasing or decreasing within their department and if they changed their policy in the last ten years to impact usage, what was the result?

The question reviewed actual program implementation and results of changes in fire departments. Eleven departments noted changes in the last 10 years in their sick leave programs. Apparently, due to the low sick leave rates reported, few reporting departments make changes to their policies. Existing policies use all the noted methods. Some department reward and some discipline, but based on their reports, both methods work.

Miami allows employees with zero sick leave use to convert their sick leave to cash or vacation. They reported a 20 percent reduction in leave this last year. Conversely, Memphis reduced its rates by affecting pay and bonus days. Chesapeake, Virginia revised its Fire Suppression Staffing and Leave Policy several times, hoping to impact sick leave usage. Although unsuccessful, they currently maintain a low annual rate of four days a year sick leave usage. Interestingly, Ft. Worth, with a reported low rate of four days a year, also altered its policy in January 1998 to reduce usage. When their employees exceed two or more

occurrences of sick or family leave, they skip them on their next due overtime shift. It appears that departments with below average rates believe abuse still exists and can be reduced.

The District of Columbia reduced absenteeism by 15 percent over the last year, but reported only changes in employee reporting requirements and clinic location. Oakland's Battalion Chief James Edwards reported their instituting a comprehensive attendance management policy. The policy progressively disciplines due to continued sick leave abuse. He did not have information for comparative analysis. Rochester changed its policy in 1990 to require a doctor's note after two consecutive days, but Captain McClary reported no change in absenteeism and they rescinded the policy in 1993.

Salt Lake City changed its policy in November 1997 but the short reporting period did not allow reporting on the effect. They pay up to 60 percent of accrued sick leave as severance pay. Shreveport added a light or limited duty policy, but reported only minimal reduction in leave. Departments did not always change their policies to specifically to reduce sick leave. Arlington, Texas expanded its extended sick leave coverage in November 1996. They did not make the change to reduce sick leave rates.

The El Paso Fire Department reduced its sick leave usage from the 1995 levels. Supervisory controls implemented in 1995 appeared initially to have little impact in 1996, but levels dropped significantly in 1997. The interim Fire Chief, hired December 1996, attempted to augment this culture change by adding sick leave review to promotional interviews. Reductions were readily apparent in reviewing records of promotional candidates during the period.

6. Do departments use incentives to reduce sick leave?

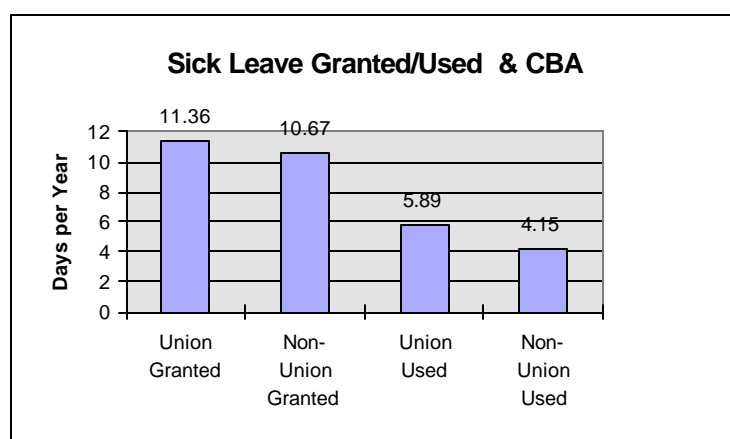
The use of incentives or rewards for not using sick leave received mixed reviews in the

literature review. The survey response also showed a varied response. Seventeen of the 26 responding departments address the issue. San Antonio, Mesa and Tulsa provide additional vacation or personal time off for excellent sick leave records. Several, Anchorage, Arlington, Atlanta, and Salt Lake City allow employees to sell back unused time. Since Anchorage has a leave bank system, the result is similar to Miami's policy that allows conversion to either vacation time or cash. Table 2, appendix G, lists departments using incentives in their sick leave program.

El Paso allows the employee to sell back accumulated sick leave for cash at retirement and to gain equivalent credited service time for their pension. Personnel sell sick leave at 100 percent for the first 75 days and one fourth of the next 65 days.

7. How many departments operate under a collective bargaining agreement and are there relationships between the CBA and sick leave?

Figure 1



Collective Bargaining Agreements are in effect in 16 of the 26 departments reporting, or 61.53 percent. Departments with a CBA issued sick leave at 11.36 days per year. Those

without unions give 0.69 days a year less at 10.67. When comparing the amount of time used for sickness, the mean for union departments is 5.89 days per year compared to the mean for non-union organizations at 4.15 days. The difference is 1.74 days per year. This seems to verify two relationships identified in the literature review. First, unions bargain for more benefits as evidenced by more time allowed. Second, personnel accruing more time off utilize that time.

8. Did the Family Medical Leave Act change the number of sick leave days taken?

This question arose from the presumption that personnel used personal sick leave for family issues as noted in the literature review. With one quarter of sick leave attributed to this need, personal sick leave usage would logically decrease after its passage in 1993. Only two responses identified a change in sick leave use and this an increase. Battalion Chief G. M. Best of Chesapeake, Virginia, Fire Department noted they do not count the time as sick leave, but sick leave use increased. The small reported usage of the FMLA, identified in the literature review, is consistent with these reports of relatively few employees using the FMLA.

9. Who monitors compliance to the sick leave policy? Does a system exist and is it computerized?

Literature review indicated a successful supervisory review system reinforces sick leave culture and therefore, reduces its use. Since the sample's sick leave rates are lower than national averages, and most departments, over 80 percent, monitor application of their sick leave policy, this is in line with the review. Usually, 77 percent, the fire department supervisor performs the review. Only six departments add either a staff or human resource department personnel to the review process. All departments include the departmental supervisor in their review process. The City of Miami Fire and Rescue incorporates committee reviews into its

process.

Atlanta, Georgia and Springfield, Missouri lacked a monitoring system and did not report sick leave figures. Only 10 respondents incorporate a computer system in their process as shown in Appendix H. This may be an important factor. Gardiner (1992) stated that to effectively monitor and control sick leave, computer information systems are essential.

El Paso's supervisory review was informal until the signing of the 1997 CBA. The new rule gives the Fire Chief the latitude to include a regular review process to the policy. The recommended policy and review are included in the Appendix C.

10. Is sick leave use reviewed in performance evaluations or for promotions within the department?

Only four of the 26 departments consider sick leave use in their promotional process. Half of the respondents consider it in their performance evaluation. Since the mean sick leave usage is low, departments may feel this is not necessary.

Sick Leave Analysis

Sick leave statistics of the El Paso Fire Department were compiled from 1995 to present. The lack of computerized information before 1995 restricted the inquiry to recent data. Several questions were asked to address the research questions. Several others were added in analyzing the material from the literature review.

1. What is the average number of days of sick leave used by members of the El Paso Fire Department?
2. Is there a difference between the various ranks within the department?

3. Are there any indicators relating to the following changes made to reduce sick leave usage?

1. Review of employee' sick leave by the District Chiefs beginning 1995
2. Inclusion of sick leave review in promotional interview beginning 1997.
3. December 30, 1997 change in the CBA -- Appendix A

EPFD Sick Leave Analysis

Three separate groups of data were examined for the El Paso Fire Department. The first analyzed the amount of sick leave used by each rank within the department. Although specialty ranks exist, such as Training Chief, the most common ranks were chosen. The small number of personnel assigned in specialty ranks can distort the rank figures since one incident can affect the analysis and render the results as meaningless. The second group selected was operations or shift personnel. The third group included all uniformed employees.

In 1995, shift commanders began an analysis of sick leave on each of the three shifts. As noted in Table 3, there was no improvement indicated from 1995 to 1996. The 12.98 average of 1995 increased by 0.22 to 13.20 days in 1996 for the Operations division. Although one shift commander noted an improvement on his shift after he began supervisor analysis of sick leave records, the first year results do not support improvement across all three shifts. It was not possible to break the number into shift groups. There was a marked improvement for 1997 for both operations and the department.

The second question wondered if management's review of sick leave during the promotional process has an impact on sick leave usage. This process began in 1997 and review of individual records showed marked improvement for promotional candidates. The departmental rank yearly average declined from 13.32 percent to 11.54 days per year. Was the

review process a factor or merely reflective of the cultural change relating to sick leave usage?

With absentee review, promotional review, and a new Fire Chief, was cultural change taking place? Gardiner (1992) noted “employees tend to respond to organizational policies by incorporating these policies in the set of beliefs and norms that are a part of employee motivation influencing attendance behavior.”

Considering the high level of sick leave usage, the city insisted in December 1997 upon including its new sick leave policy into the CBA. Before that time, the rule applied only non-uniformed employees. Sick leave averages were only available for the first quarter of 1998, but a significant reduction occurred after the change in the CBA signed December 30, 1997. During this short period, usage fell 22.53 percent to 8.87 days a year. If this trend continues for the year, the two year reduction from 1996 through 1998 could equal 32.80 percent.

An analysis of the department averages for years 1995 and 1997 was performed for all fire department uniformed employees. Sick leave usage dropped from its 1995 amount of 12.90 days per year to the 1997 rate of 11.24. Comparisons were also made to other city employee groups within El Paso. An August 1996 study done by the City’s personnel department before the implementation of a new sick leave policy indicated each city employee averaged 9.71 sick leave days per year. This excluded the Fire and Police departments. These high usage rates compared unfavorably to the national average of 7.2. The city study indicated the national average of employees without benefits at four days per year. Their 1997 study of Police sick leave totaled 4.29 days per year, significantly below both the fire and other city

Table 3

1995-1998 SICK LEAVE USAGE for the EL PASO FIRE DEPARTMENT

RANK	FF	FST	LT	CPT	DICH	DPCH	AVG
1995 RANK	10.90	14.09	18.65	15.44	11.83	1.00	13.28
1995 OPERATIONS	10.40	14.83	17.70	15.70	13.06	.66	12.98
1995 UNIFORM							12.90
1996 RANK	11.80	15.14	15.40	13.80	9.38	8.75	13.32
1996 OPERATIONS	11.10	14.90	17.18	15.00	9.33	11.33	13.20
1997 RANK	10.60	11.78	12.70	14.02	11.50	5.75	11.54
1997 OPERATIONS	10.10	11.54	13.93	15.15	12.20	4.66	11.45
1997 UNIFORM							11.24
1998 RANK 1st Quarter	6.90	10.37	9.90	13.40	3.77	13.33	8.73
1998 OPS 1st Quarter	7.09	10.48	9.22	12.35	8.00	10.00	8.87

DISCUSSION

The survey results mirrored the literature findings in most instances. Statistical analysis supported the sample figures as being within the expected ranges. Also, National Fire Academy applied research projects by Smith (1990), Haas (1996), Bublitz (1992), and Robinson (1993) provided similar results from their small sample size. They usually surveyed within their department or within their immediate area. While the comparison of the El Paso Fire Department for size and employees aligned neatly with the mean for the sample population and size figures, sick leave comparisons revealed vast differences. These differences identified an

obvious problem within the El Paso Fire Department.

Sick leave control and reduction require a comprehensive approach to leave management. Each component is critical to the whole and each affects the others. Since El Paso Fire Department sick leave rates far exceed national and survey means, the problems can no longer be denied and must be addressed by all participants. Acceptance of the problem is the first step in finding a cure. Resolution requires dealing with multiple factors such as organization culture, control, reward, and discipline. It also requires cooperation between management and labor. By identifying the immensity of the problem, all participants may realize the negative impact for taxpayers, city officials, management, and employees. The cure definitely depends on participation by all.

A serious sick leave problem exists within the El Paso Fire Department. As it grew over the last ten years, little was done to alter the course. With levels that exceed double the survey average and triple individual sectors, it obviously has an impact on members and their benefits. The solutions have already begun. Concurrent with this project, the collective bargaining agreement added new language requiring a physicians' note for certain illnesses. It also allows the Fire Chief to develop supervisory reviews of all employee's sick leave records. He may take corrective actions against employees who fail to meet the standard.

Many of the recommended solutions already exist in some form on the department. An organizational cultural change is needed to affect attitudes and ideas. This process has begun. Additionally, other recommended corrective actions need to be addressed. To be successful, the labor management team must work together. Leave management must be a comprehensive process.

Reducing sick leave use improves departmental efficiency in many areas. Better service is provided to the citizens of El Paso. Operational costs are reduced in cuts in overtime pay and reduced injuries. Additional programs may be developed. Since training scheduled are stressed by state and local certification requirements, additional personnel allow extra training sessions. New pilot programs can be tested. All segments benefit when the department operate effectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As noted, the study identified a major problem with sick leave within the El Paso Fire Department. As with most problems, there is not one answer. Recommendations usually fall into two categories, positive types and disciplinary types. The first rewards those who do not abuse its use and the second punishes abusers. Since both types appear to work, the following recommendations include both types.

The department should adopt additional language into their Administrative Procedures Manual to clarify implementation of Civil Service Rule 13 recently adopted in the CBA. The proposed language is included in Appendix B. This includes a semi-annual supervisory review and the possible subsequent requirement of documentation by the Fire Chief.

The adoption of the Fire Service Joint Labor Management Wellness/Fitness Initiative is an important commitment for both Management and Labor. The Medical Section deals with history, periodic exam, tests and screening. Exercise, strength and endurance are part of the Fitness section. Injury/Fitness/Medical Rehabilitation deals with the program to return affected personnel to duty status. The next section on Behavioral health deals with assistance programs

such as substance abuse, tobacco cessation, stress management, critical incident stress management, counseling and spiritual needs. Data Collection is the final but critical component of the Initiative.

The Initiative is presently under review by the Safety and Health section of the department. The newly formed Labor and Management Fitness Committee should meet to create a timeline for program implementation. The 1997-2000 CBA created this committee on December 30, 1997.

The organizational cultural change concerning use of sick leave must continue and be expanded by incorporating it into other programs such as Officer development. Continued reinforcement will be developed by continued use in promotional review panels and semi-annual leave reviews.

The Personnel Department should review and study other systems such as paid time off banks, no-fault systems and incentives. Paid time-off banks have been shown to be an effective method in dealing with sick leave abuse. No-fault systems help reduce the supervisory time spent monitoring employees. Although incentives already exist, they should investigate more immediate reward systems. Immediate gratification may prove to be more effective than payment at retirement (Haas, 1996).

An alternative duty program is recommended that understands the physical challenges of fire fighting. Fire fighters cannot return to regular duty as quickly as do non-uniformed city employees. They should consider a system that allows them to contribute to the department prior to regular duty as essential component to a leave program. This could reduce sick leave usage and provide additional personnel for needed administrative support. A policy does not

presently exist.

As the city expands its network to the fire department, computer analyses of personnel leave records should be readily available to all supervisors. Records review may not be successful if it is a time consuming and tedious process.

The El Paso Fire Department must change these items to reduce its sick leave. Efficient public safety organizations are critical to community development and economic growth. The fire department will help ensure their future by decreasing the cost and increasing the services to the citizens of El Paso.

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APPENDIX A

1997-2000 ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS AND LOCAL 51, INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS ARTICLE XV SICK LEAVE SECTION 5

The Fire Chief retains the right to require a medical certificate in accordance with Rule 13 of the Civil Service Commission Rules before an employee shall be paid sick leave under the provisions of this Article.

APPENDIX B

EL PASO CIVIL SERVICE RULES AND REGULATION

RULE 13

Section 2. Sick Leave.

a. All permanent employees who are regularly scheduled to work, on an average, a minimum of twenty (20) hours per week are entitled to an annual sick leave, with full pay, to be taken when necessary, and in addition to the time provided for vacations, as follows:

40 hour per week employees -- 120.0 hours per year

56 hour per week employees -- 180.0 hour per year

The maximum accrual for sick leave is sixty (60) days.

(Fire Department Collective Bargaining agreement allows unlimited sick leave accumulation)

b. No sick leave of three (3) or more consecutive work days will be granted to any person without a physician's certificate verifying that the leave is necessary for medical reasons.

Additionally, no sick leave the day before, the day of, or the day after a City designated holiday will be granted to any person without a physician's certificate verifying that leave is necessary for medical reason. (Amended 9/17/96)

c. Not applicable

d. Not applicable

e. The department head granting sick or Emergency Leave will immediately report the leave and subsequently, the individual's return, to the Personnel Director. The department head or the Personnel Director may at any time inquire or investigate into the use of sick leave or Emergency Leave and require medical certification for all subsequent absences, or take

other appropriate action consistent with the Charter of these Rules. Reasons to inquire or investigate shall include, but are not limited to, the following: (amended 9/17/96)

- (1) Habitual use of sick leave in single or partial day increments, without current medical documentation.
- (2) A pattern of using sick leave the day before or after a scheduled day off.
- (3) A pattern of using sick leave on a payday or the first work day the employee is scheduled to work after a payday.
- (4) Using sick leave as soon as it has been accrued.

APPENDIX C

Proposed Administrative Procedures

Sick Leave Section 6

01 General Employees are entitled to sick leave, with full pay, to be taken when necessary and if time has been accrued. (See Articles of Agreement and Civil Service Rules and Regulations Rule 13)

02 Reporting Off Sick Members reporting off sick shall notify their work station and the on-duty District Chief from their assigned district by calling and leaving a message on the answering machine. The telephone numbers for the District Chiefs are:

Rescue 1 543-6150

Rescue 2 585-3609

Rescue 3 564-0354

Rescue 4 598-6003

Rescue 5 751-9991

Personnel who require a relief should call as early as possible, but at least two (2) hours prior to their duty time. Staff personnel who do not require relief shall call their immediate supervisor prior to their scheduled duty time.

03 Returning to Duty Members returning to duty from sick leave shall call their work station and the on-duty District Chief in their assigned district by calling and leaving a message on the answering machine. Personnel who require a relief shall call at least two (2) hours prior to duty time. Employees may return to duty from any form of sick leave during a shift. Employees returning after the start of a shift should contact the District Chief/Division Head in their assigned

area or the Deputy Chief if the District Chief is not available. Do not leave a message on the answering machine when returning from sick leave after the start of a shift.

04 Purpose and Intent The purpose of personnel who require a relief calling off sick or calling back from sick two (2) hour prior to duty time is to provide the necessary time to notify relief personnel.

05 Sick Leave Forms Attach all necessary information to the leave forms as outlined in the Administrative Procedures Manual Section 01-Leave Forms.

06 Proof of Illness Upon returning to work, the employee is required to provide a physicians' note verifying that the leave was necessary for medical reasons when off for three (3) consecutive working days or more. Additionally, no sick leave the day before, the day of, or the day after a city designated holiday will be granted to any person without a Physicians' Note verifying that the leave was necessary for medical reasons.

07 Sick Leave Record Review Guidelines The leave record of every employee shall be reviewed in January and July of each year. The appropriate District Chief or Division Head will perform the review to determine if abuse of sick leave may be occurring. If the review reveals any of the below patterns, District Chiefs shall confer with their Deputy Chief and Division Chiefs shall confer with their Assistant Chief. If they determine a problem may exist, the District/Division Chief shall meet with the employee to discuss the pattern. If no reasonable explanation for the leave usage or pattern, the District Chief/Division Head will recommend that the letter requesting Physician's verification be issued to the employee.

08 Review Reasons to inquire or investigate shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 01 More than three (3) days (8 or 12 hour shift) of sick leave without current medical documentation.
- 02 More than two unscheduled absences the day before or the day after scheduled vacation leave without current medical documentation (this includes extending a scheduled vacation by calling in sick before or after the scheduled days).
- 03 More than two (2) occurrences of sick leave on a pay day (1145 Friday to 1145 Saturday)
- 04 More than two (2) days of sick leave taken on the same day(s) of the week.
- 05 More than two (2) days of sick leave taken on a Saturday or Sunday.
- 06 The employee uses sick leave as it is accrued

Employee's who do not comply with the department's written directive to provide a Physician's Note will be denied sick leave pay and in appropriate circumstances may be subject to disciplinary action. Progressive disciplinary steps are recommended, but each case is considered on its merits in conjunction with the employees overall record.

10 Confidentiality All employees must remember that any medical information obtained about an employee, oral or written, must remain confidential and be kept separate from the employee's regular personnel files. Failure to maintain confidentiality is a violation of state and federal law.

11 Follow up If the District Chief or Division Head believes that the requirement for a Physicians Note has not improved the employee's attendance, or if there are any questions regarding the veracity, authenticity or thoroughness of the medical documentation, the supervisor may contact their Assistant Chief for further guidance.

12 Statutes Supervisors must be aware that certain types of absences are covered under the federal and/or state statutes (i.e., ADA or FMLA) and must be addressed on a case by case basis. If a question arises concerning a particular case as to whether or not the law applies, contact the Assistant Chief for guidance

13 Accountability Supervisors shall be held accountable for the fair and consistent application of these procedures.

APPENDIX D

THE CITY OF EL PASO FIRE DEPARTMENT

8600 MONTANA AVENUE EL PASO, TEXAS 79925 (915) 771-1000 FAX (915) 771-1023

Glenn M. Johns
Fire Chief

William F. Gregersen
Assistant Fire Chief

Tracy L. McGinty
Assistant Fire Chief

Allen D. Bermes
Deputy Chief

Roberto Rivera
Deputy Chief

Robert E. Vance
Deputy Chief

Raul Tarango
Administrative Chief

January 18, 1998

Dear Fire Service Professional:

I would appreciate your assistance in completing the attached survey as part of my applied research project for the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program.

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey and return or fax it by February 15, 1998. Your response is an important portion of the research. Contact me if you have any questions regarding the survey at 915-771-1003.

Please include a copy of your leave policy with the survey

Thanks for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

William F. Gregersen

Sick Leave Survey

Agency Name _____ State _____

Number of Paid Personnel _____ Number of Volunteers _____ Population Served _____

Person completing survey Name: _____ Title: _____

1. Indicate the number of days provided each employee each year for the following types of leave:

Sick Leave _____
Personal Day(s) _____
Emergency Leave _____
Vacation Leave _____
Funeral Leave _____
Other _____

2. Are Time Trades allowed? Yes _____ No _____

3. What is the maximum number of days of leave an employee can accrue?

Sick Leave _____ Personal Day(s) _____
Vacation Leave _____ Other _____

4. Are employees paid/rewarded for unused/accumulated sick leave?

Yes _____ Method _____

No _____

5. Who monitors compliance to the sick leave policy?

Fire department supervisor _____
Staff _____
Human Resource department _____
No formal sick leave policy _____
Other _____

6. Does your department use a system for monitoring sick leave usage?
Yes _____ No _____

Is this system computerized? Yes _____ No _____

7. What is average number of days of sick leave used per fire employee per year?

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| A. Firefighter _____ | B. All Ranks _____ |
| Officer _____ | C. Operations/shift _____ |
| Chief Officer _____ | Staff (Mon-Fri) _____ |

8. Has sick leave increased or decreased over the following periods?
One year %+/- _____ Five years %+/- _____ Ten years %+/- _____

9. If your sick leave policy changed during the last ten years, indicate the date and describe the change.

Was this change made to reduce or control the use of sick leave?

Yes _____ No _____

Did these changes reduce sick leave usage?

Yes _____ %- _____ No _____ %+ _____

10. Did the passage of the Family Medical Leave Act in 1993 change the average number of sick leave days taken?

Yes _____ +/- _____ No _____

11. Is sick leave usage evaluated in performance evaluation reports?

Yes _____ No _____

12. Is sick leave usage evaluated in your promotional process?

Yes _____ No _____

13. Does your department have a collective bargaining agreement?

Yes _____ No _____

14. Is your sick leave policy/procedure included in the collective bargaining agreement?

Yes _____ No _____

Sick Leave Analysis

15. Are you familiar with the Paid Time Off (PTO) Bank type systems?

Yes _____ No _____

Does your department utilize this type system?

Yes _____ No _____

APPENDIX E

LARGEST 150 CITIES -- USA TODAY

1. New York, New York
2. *Los Angeles, California
3. Chicago, Illinois
4. *Houston, Texas
5. *Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
6. San Diego, California
7. Phoenix, Arizona
8. *San Antonio, Texas
9. *Dallas, Texas
10. *Detroit, Michigan
11. San Jose, California
12. *Indianapolis, Indiana
13. *San Francisco, California
14. Jacksonville, Florida
15. *Baltimore, Maryland
16. Columbus, Ohio
17. El Paso, Texas
18. *Memphis, Tennessee
19. Milwaukee, Wisconsin
20. Boston, Mass
21. *Washington, DC
22. Austin, Texas
23. *Seattle, Washington
24. *Nashville, Tennessee
25. Cleveland, Ohio
26. Denver, Colorado
27. Portland, Oregon
28. *Fort Worth, Texas
29. New Orleans, Louisiana
30. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
31. *Tucson, Arizona
32. Charlotte, North Carolina
33. *Kansas City, Missouri
34. Virginia Beach, Virginia
35. *Honolulu, Hawaii
36. Long Beach, California
37. *Albuquerque, New Mexico
38. *Atlanta, Georgia
39. Fresno, California
40. *Tulsa, Oklahoma
41. *Las Vegas, Nevada
42. Sacramento, California
43. *Oakland, California
44. *Miami, Florida
45. Omaha, Nebraska
46. *Minneapolis, Minnesota
47. *St. Louis, Missouri
48. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
49. Cincinnati, Ohio
50. Colorado Springs, Colorado
51. *Mesa, Arizona
52. Wichita, Kansas
53. Toledo, Ohio
54. Buffalo, New York
55. Santa Ana, California
56. *Arlington, Texas
57. Anaheim, California
58. *Tampa, Florida
59. *Corpus Christi, Texas
60. Newark, New Jersey
61. Louisville, Kentucky
62. *St. Paul, Minnesota
63. Birmingham, Alabama
64. *Riverside, California
65. *Aurora, Colorado
66. *Anchorage, Alaska
67. Raleigh, North Carolina
68. Lexington-Fayette, Kentucky
69. St. Petersburg, Florida
70. Norfolk, Virginia
71. Stockton, California
72. Jersey City, New Jersey
73. *Rochester, New York
74. Akron, Ohio

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 75. Baton Rouge, Louisiana | 113. Knoxville, Tennessee |
| 76. Lincoln, Nebraska | 114. Worcester, Massachusetts |
| 77. Bakersfield, California | 115. Laredo, Texas |
| 78. Hialeah, Florida | 116. Tempe, Arizona |
| 79. Mobile, Alabama | 117. Syracuse, New York |
| 80. Richmond, Virginia | 118. Reno, Nevada |
| 81. *Madison, Wisconsin | 119. Winston-Salem, North Carolina |
| 82. Montgomery, Alabama | 120. Boise, Idaho |
| 83. *Greensboro, North Carolina | 121. *Providence, Rhode Island |
| 84. *Lubbock, Texas | 122. Chula Vista, California |
| 85. *Des Moines, Iowa | 123. Fort Lauderdale, Florida |
| 86. *Jackson, Mississippi | 124. *Oxnard, California |
| 87. *Chesapeake, Virginia | 125. Chattanooga, Tennessee |
| 88. Plano, Texas | 126. Paterson, New Jersey |
| 89. *Shreveport, Louisiana | 127. Springfield, Massachusetts |
| 90. Huntington Beach, California | 128. Durham, North Carolina |
| 91. Yonkers, New York | 129. Garden Grove, California |
| 92. *Garland, Texas | 130. Oceanside, California |
| 93. Grand Rapids, Michigan | 131. Ontario, California |
| 94. Fremont, California | 132. *Rockford, Illinois |
| 95. Spokane, Washington | 133. *Springfield, Missouri |
| 96. Fort Wayne, Indiana | 134. Chandler, Arizona |
| 97. Glendale, California | 135. Kansas City, Kansas |
| 98. *San Bernardino, California | 136. Moreno Valley, California |
| 99. Columbus, Georgia | 137. Hampton, Virginia |
| 100. Glendale, Arizona | 138. Warren, Michigan |
| 101. Tacoma, Washington | 139. Bridgeport, Connecticut |
| 102. Scottsdale, Arizona | 140. Tallahassee, Florida |
| 103. Modesto, California | 141. Savannah, Georgia |
| 104. Irving, Texas | 142. Torrance, California |
| 105. Newport News, Virginia | 143. Lakewood, Colorado |
| 106. Little Rock, Arkansas | 144. *Flint, Michigan |
| 107. Arlington, Virginia | 145. Pomona, California |
| 108. Orlando, Florida | 146. Pasadena, California |
| 109. Dayton, Ohio | 147. Hartford, Connecticut |
| 110. *Salt Lake City, Utah | 148. Brownsville, Texas |
| 111. Huntsville, Alabama | 149. Pasadena, Texas |
| 112. Amarillo, Texas | 150. Overland Park, Kansas |

* Indicates the city was included in the sample **Highlighted** cities responded to the survey

APPENDIX F

Table 1

DAYS PER YEAR SICK LEAVE USAGE FOR SURVEYED CITIES

City/Organization	Dept.	F F	Officer	Chief
Arlington TX	4.6	4.6	4.8	3.6
Chesapeake VA	4	4	2	2
DC		7		20
Dallas TX	7			
Ft. Worth TX	4			
Garland TX	3.2			
Honolulu HI	3.8			
Memphis TN	3	3	1	0
Mesa AZ	4.3			
Oxnard CA	7	7	8	5
Providence RI	9.42			
Rochester NY	4.65	3.2	9.93	4.85
Salt Lake UT	7.4			
Seattle WA	6	6	6	6
Shreveport LA	2			
Mean	5.03	4.97	5.2	6.05
El Paso	11.45	11.05	13.11	10.45

Chi-squared Value 18.44

Degrees of Freedom = 15-1 14

Critical Chi-squared Value 0.05 23.68

APPENDIX G

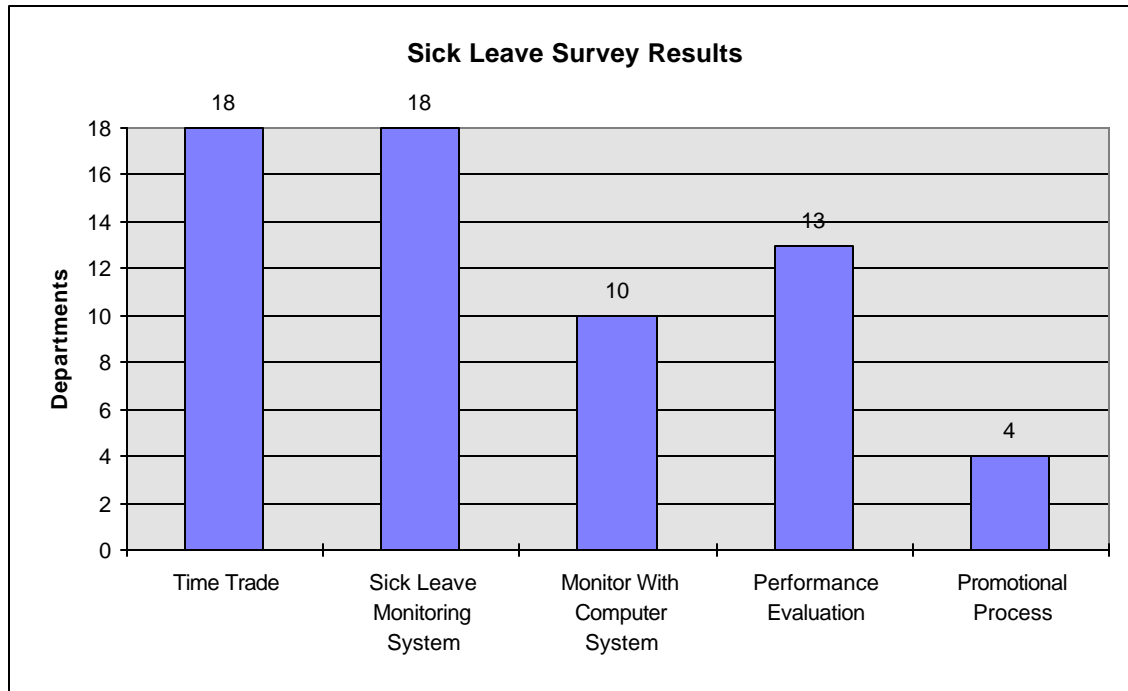
Table 2

Sick Leave Incentive Programs

CITY/ORGANIZATION	REWARD/INCENTIVE
Anchorage AK FD	all leave has cash value
Arlington TX FD	over 960 hours -- sell back unused next year
Atlanta GA FD	1/4 paid over 240 hours
City of Miami FL FD	0 use -- allow 1/2 conversion to vacation or cash
DC FD	% of sick leave paid at retirement
Dallas TX FD	1080 hours paid at over 20 years or at retirement
Ft. Worth TX FD	maximum of 90 days paid at retirement
Greensboro NC FD	unused sick leave added to retirement years
Lubbock TX FD	maximum of 90 days paid at retirement
Madison WI FD	100% paid above 150 days
Memphis TN FD	maximum of 65 days paid at retirement
Mesa AZ FD	converted to vacation above maximum @ 1/2 rate
Oxnard CA FD	1/2 paid at retirement
Providence RI FD	100% paid at retirement
Salt Lake City UT FD	conversion to vacation and cash
San Antonio TX FD	2 bonus days for 0 use in 6 month period

APPENDIX H

TABLE 4

Sick Leave Survey Results

Note: N=26